

IN THE DRAWINGS

Please delete the unentered proposed Figure 5.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 17, 19, 21, 22, 26 and 27.

Please add new Claims 28-30.

SUB J<sup>1</sup> / 28. (New) A device for processing hydrous polymer gel of variable thickness, comprising:

a first cutting roll having at least one axially extending cross cutting element including a cutting edge; and

H 2 a back-up roll spaced from said cutting roll so as to form a nip, said first cutting roll being mounted above the longitudinal axis of said back-up roll such that a smallest distance between said cutting edge of the at least one cross cutting element and said back-up roll is situated below the crown of the back-up roll, whereby said at least one cutting edge cooperates with said back-up roll to cut a layer of hydrous polymer gel at the nip.

29. (New) A device of claim 27, wherein said first cutting roll has at least one circumferentially extending cutting element including a cutting edge.

30. (New) A device of claim 27, further comprising a second cutting roll having at least one circumferentially extending cutting element including a cutting edge.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 17, 19, 21, 22, 26 and 27 have been cancelled. New Claims 28-30 have been introduced. Of these, new Claim 28 recites that the cutting roll is mounted above the longitudinal axis of the backup roll such that the smallest distance between the cutting edge of at least one crosscutting element in the backup roll is situated below the crown of the backup roll. This is clearly shown in the figures. Claim 29 recites that the first cutting roll has at least one circumferentially extending cutting element including a cutting edge. This is shown, for example, at 14 in the figures. New Claim 30 recites a second cutting roll having at least one circumferentially extending cutting element including a cutting edge. This is shown, for example, at 14 in Figure 4.

According to the feature now set forth in the claims, the cutting roll is not mounted directly above the backup roll, but is offset such that a smallest distance between the cutting edge of the crosscutting element of the first cutting roll and the backup roll is situated below the crown of the backup roll, e.g., see angle " $\alpha$ " in the attached illustrative figure. This provides improved cutting of the layer of hydrous polymer gel at the nip between the rolls.

The cancelled claims were rejected as being obvious over Heywood in view of Williams, optionally in view of Stream, or as being obvious over Leeper et al in view of Anetsberger, optionally in view of Stream. However, in each of Heywood, Williams and Leeper et al, the cutting roll is positioned directly above the back-up roll; there is no disclosure of the presently claimed feature whereby a smallest distance between a cutting edge of a crosscutting element of the cutting roll and the back-up roll is situated below the crown of the back-up roll. Anetsberger lacks a back-up roll and so is incapable of providing this missing teaching. Stream was cited only for the limited teaching of plastic coating,

which is no longer being claimed. The new claims are therefore believed to clearly define over any combination of the above references.

Concerning paragraph 2 of the Office Action, Applicants are withdrawing the submission of the proposed new Figure 5, and have deleted the reference to this figure in the specification. The objection of the drawings is therefore believed to be moot.

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112 is also believed to be moot in light of the cancellation of the original claims.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early notice of allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 7, change the paragraph beginning at line 28 to read:

--Fig. 4 shows a perspective representation of a fourth embodiment of the device according to the present invention, here the cross cutting and longitudinal cutting elements are located on two separate rolls[; and].--

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 28-30 (New)